The Second Epistle of PETER

To fellow believers

1 [1]Simon Peter, slave[1] and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained[2] with us the same kind of faith in the righteousness[3] of our God and Savior,[4] Jesus Christ: [2]may grace and peace be multiplied to you[5] through a real knowledge of God[6] and of our Lord Jesus,[7] [3]in that His divine power has granted to us all things *pertaining* to life and godliness, through the real knowledge of the One[8] who called us by glory and excellence,[9] [4]through which[10] He has granted to us such precious and extraordinary promises, so that through these[11] you may become partakers of a divine nature,[12] having escaped the depravity that is in the world because of lust.[13]

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[1] That is right, "slave"—Jude (vs. 1), James (1:1) and Paul (Romans 1:1) also call themselves slaves of Jesus Christ.

[2] The verb here suggests receiving something by lot or appointment; in this case the source would be God's will: this faith is something God apportioned to them.

[3] That is right, faith in Christ's righteousness: 1) that Jesus was righteous, not dying for any wrongdoing of His own; 2) that being intrinsically righteous He can impart His righteousness to us.

[4] "God and Savior" refer to a single person, the Son.

[5] "Multiplied"—not just a little, lots. In his first letter Peter ended the salutation here, but now he fleshes out the means.

[6] As our genuine knowledge of God grows, so the amount or degree of grace and peace we receive also grows.

[7] Here the reference is to two persons, Father and Son—although the grammar could be taken to indicate a single person, in which case I would render 'of God, even our Lord Jesus' (or 'Jesus our Lord'). But looking at the next verse, "His divine power" refers to the Father, because "the One who called" refers to the Son.

[8] Again, we only appropriate the complete provision for "life and godliness" to the degree that we grow in our genuine knowledge of God. As Creator He made everything upon which life depends, including life itself, but our understanding of and appreciation for His provision is measured by our relationship with Him.

[9] I take it that Peter is saying that it is the glory and moral excellence of Christ that attracts us, but there is the extraordinary promise that we can share in those qualities, as he spells out in verse 4. Instead of "by glory", perhaps 19% of the Greek manuscripts have 'by His own glory' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[10] "Which" is plural and presumably refers back to "glory and excellence".

[11] The promises—but of course we have to appropriate them.

[12] There is no definite article with "divine nature"; "become" indicates a process—the more like Christ we become, the more divine will our nature be.

[13] At times Peter's syntax seems to be almost as convoluted as Paul's; the first four verses form a single sentence. The precise interrelationship of the dependent clauses is not transparent. The notes above give my understanding of Peter's intent. It is the inordinate desire (lust) for anything in this world that leads to depravity. The proper amount of food, drink, pleasure, money, power or whatever is a good thing. It is when people want more that they get into trouble.

Take the Truth seriously!

Our 'entrance' depends on us

5So for this very reason, making every effort,[1] to your faith add excellence,[2] and to the excellence knowledge, 6and to the knowledge self-control, and to the self-control perseverance, and to the perseverance godliness, 7and to the godliness brotherly affection, and to the brotherly affection love.[3] 8Because with these things existing and increasing in you, it makes *you to be* neither useless nor unfruitful in the real knowledge[4] of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9For he who lacks these things is blind, being *so* myopic, having forgotten the cleansing from his past sins.[5]

10Therefore, brothers, you should be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure,[6] for if you do these things you will never stumble.[7] 11Because in this way you will be granted the abundant entrance[8] into the unending kingdom of our Lord and Savior,

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1 Here Peter emphasizes human responsibility, heavily.

2 The word used here can refer to excellence in any area, but in this context the emphasis is presumably on moral excellence.

3 Do these qualities have to be added in this sequence, or can we tackle them in any order, or even all at once? If this sequence must be followed I do not understand how it works. I believe spiritual growth moves in an upward spiral; the Holy Spirit makes the rounds of all areas, progressively increasing the level of excellence, or Christ-likeness. I take this to be the point of the "increasing" in verse 8.

4 I have used "real knowledge" repeatedly because I take that to be the intent of the Text. Real knowledge of God contrasts with human ideas about God and false 'knowledge' furnished by demonic prophecies, visions, etc. It also contrasts with true theoretical knowledge about God—real knowledge must be experiential, as well as being true. Notice that we are supposed to be useful, to be fruitful. If we do not grow, something is definitely wrong, as verse 9 makes clear.

5 Peter says that someone who lacks the qualities listed in verses 5-7 has forgotten his cleansing and become myopic to the point of being practically blind. If we do not walk with God, do not study His Word, do not listen to the Holy Spirit, Satan will cheerfully take care of the rest.

6 As in his first letter, Peter emphasizes both divine sovereignty and human responsibility, only this verse is especially bothersome to certain theological systems. If we can make our election sure, then we can also make it unsure, or words have no meaning. Since both truths are clearly presented from cover to cover of the Bible, theological systems that emphasize only one of the two do not do justice to the Sacred Text. To emphasize only one is to hop on one foot—to walk, run and work efficiently you really need both feet. To our limited human logic, the two truths appear to be incompatible, but to God's infinite logic they obviously are not. Those who are wise will bow to God's logic.

7 The verb used is 'to stumble', not 'to fall', but the tense used suggests a permanent consequence.

8 The Text has the definite article; I take the point to be that there will be different levels or kinds of "entrance"; some will have many rewards, others some, others none (1 Corinthians 3:15). Those who follow the orientation in these verses will receive many rewards, they will get "the abundant entrance". (I suppose we will all agree that it is better to get in by the skin of your teeth [1 Corinthians 3:15] than not to get in at all, but would it not be better yet to have some rewards? The amount is up to us.)

Jesus Christ.[1]

Peter's death is imminent

12So then, I will not neglect to keep reminding you about these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. **13**Yes, I think it right to stir you up by a reminder, as long as I am in this 'tent', **14**knowing that the shedding of my 'tent' is imminent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.[2] **15**Moreover I will take pains to provide a reminder of these things for you to have,[3] after my exit.

The prophetic Word is trustworthy

16Now then, we did not follow craftily devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; rather we were attentive eyewitnesses of His majesty—**17**because He received from God the Father honor and glory when that **Voice**[4] was directed to Him by the Magnificent Glory, "This is my Son, the beloved, in whom I am *always* well pleased"—**18**yes, we heard this Voice being uttered from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.[5]

19And so we have the most reliable prophetic Word,[6] to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place,[7] until the

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[1] To participate in that "unending Kingdom" is surely worth whatever effort is required of us. The difficulty is that all such effort must be expended in faith.

[2] The Lord told Peter his time was up, and evidently did the same for Paul (2 Timothy 4:6). "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:16). A servant of God dies only at the appointed time.

[3] Verses 12 & 13 refer to repeated reminders while he is still in his 'tent', which would be his own ongoing activity; so why the 'moreover' in verse 15? In the NKJV verse 15 reads: "Moreover, I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease". Well, how can you 'ensure' that someone will 'always have a reminder' of something? It seems clear to me that the something has to be written down; a reminder has to be in writing, to be guaranteed. So what is Peter's intention? He specifies "a reminder of these things", so what are the 'these things'? They are evidently the things he will discuss in this letter. But he must be referring to something more than the initial draft of the letter (or the verse becomes meaningless)—hence, multiple copies. For more on the subject of multiple copies, please see the article "Multiple Autograph Copies", available from my website: www.prunch.org, or on pages 16-19 in the fourth to the sixth editions of my book, *God Has Preserved His Text*.

[4] Peter never forgot that VOICE; he even coined the phrase, Magnificent Glory, to describe the source. Evidently what happened on that mountain was totally overwhelming. What happened there turned an ordinary mountain into a "holy" one.

[5] Verses 16-18 have to do with the transfiguration experience: those present had a foretaste of "the power and coming" (verse 16) of the Lord; they experienced a microcosm of the Messianic Millennial Kingdom.

[6] "Reliable prophetic Word" about what? About the Messianic Millennial Kingdom—the mount of transfiguration event confirmed all the O.T. prophecies that there would be such a Kingdom.

[7] In this dark world we need the light of God's Word, but when all prophecies are fulfilled and we are glorified, when we are basking in the light of the Lamb (Revelation 21:23), the prophetic Word we now know will belong to ancient history.

day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;[1] **20**knowing this first, that no Prophecy of Scripture comes to be from private release;[2] **21**for no Prophecy ever came by the will of man, rather holy men of God spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.[3]

Watch out for false teachers!

Their teachings are destructive

2 **1**However, there were also <u>false</u> prophets among the people, just as, indeed, there will be false teachers among you, who will introduce[4] destructive heresies, even denying the Owner who bought them (bringing on themselves swift destruction).[5] **2**And many will follow their licentious ways, because of which the way of the Truth will be defamed.[6] **3**And in covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; since way back the judgment for such people is not slack, and their destruction will not sleep.

Their doom is sure

4Because if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but delivered them into chains of darkness, confining them in Tartarus[7] to be reserved for judgment, **5**and did not spare the ancient world but preserved Noah, with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when He brought a flood on the world of the ungodly, **6**and condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction, reducing them to ashes (providing a warning to those who are intent on being ungodly),[8] **7**while He rescued upright Lot, who was distressed by the licentious lifestyle of

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[1] An interesting figure of speech—I imagine that "the day dawning" and "the morning star rising" are basically synonymous, since the morning star heralds the new day. But the new day happens in our hearts; eternal life is a quality of life that we can start enjoying right now, in this world. However, Peter's use of "until" points to the future Glorious Day.

[2] The word rendered "release" occurs only here in the New Testament, but the basic meaning of the root is 'to loose' or 'release'. With reference to a prophetic word it could refer either to its enunciation/origination or to its interpretation. Verse 21 makes clear that here it is the origination. False or fake prophecies derive from the will of the 'prophet' (or demonic influence), but true prophecy never does.

[3] Here we have an impressive description of the process of Inspiration.

[4] The verb here does not normally imply secrecy; purveyors of false ideas usually come on as sincere, above board, confident, even bold.

[5] Sometimes we wish that destruction were a little 'swifter', but 3:9 below gives the answer.

[6] The biblical worldview is defamed.

[7] Tartarus is not to be equated with Hades (the holding area for departed human spirits) nor with the Lake of Fire, since the Text here clearly says those angels are being <u>reserved</u> for judgment. The day when Satan and his angels will be cast into the Lake is still future (Revelation 20:10, Matthew 25:41). So Tartarus is a prison for certain fallen angels—for more about those angels see 1 Peter 3:19-20 and Jude 6-7.

[8] Unfortunately, "those who are intent on being ungodly" could care less about any such warnings, even if they have any awareness of them.

the wicked **8**(for that upright man,[1] dwelling among them, tormented an upright soul from day to day by seeing and hearing lawless deeds)— **9***then* the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of testings and to reserve the unjust under punishment[2] for the day of judgment, **10**and especially those who go after the flesh in the lust for defilement,[3] and despise authority.

Their depravity is 'unreal'

Audacious and self-willed, they revile majestic beings without fear,[4] **11**whereas angels, though being greater in might and power,[5] do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.[6] **12**But these, as unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct made to be caught and destroyed, spouting off in matters of which they are ignorant, will be destroyed by their own depravity,[7] **13**receiving the wages of unrighteousness. Counting it a pleasure to carouse in the daytime, they are stains and blemishes, reveling in their own deceptions[8] while they feast with you, **14**having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin,[9] enticing unstable souls; having a heart trained in greediness they are children of a curse;[10]

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[1] Compared to the people around him Lot was definitely "upright", but evidently it was mostly a passive uprightness; he did not make any converts, and even lost his immediate family.

[2] They are under punishment already before the Day of judgment. Compare Luke 16:19-31, which is not said to be a parable: in Hades (which is not the Lake of Fire), before the final judgment, the rich man was already being punished (when someone is put in prison he is already being punished, before his case is tried and sentence pronounced). In Hades there is a great gulf between the just and the unjust. Since we determine our destination by what we do in this life, and there is no second chance (the rich man knew he was condemned), the punishment, or the blessing, starts at physical death.

[3] People who are greedy in their moral depravity tend not to respect (or even acknowledge) authority, including that of angelic beings.

[4] Literally 'glories'—based on the next verse, it appears that they are high ranking fallen angels.

[5] Greater than unregenerate human beings (presumably not than those seated in Christ—Ephesians 1:20-21, 2:6).

[6] Compare Jude 9.

[7] Depravity destroys the quality of life already, down here, even before death and judgment.

[8] "Reveling in their own deceptions"—I imagine all of us know people like this.

[9] The eyes don't stop sinning. I am reminded of our Lord's words in Matthew 6:22-23. "The lamp of the body is the eye. So if your eye is sound your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil your whole body will be full of darkness. So if the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" Of course we have two eyes, but the Text has 'eye' in the singular. I take it that the reference is to the way we interpret what we see (which is our real 'eye')—two people, one pure and one vile, observing the same scene will give very different interpretations to it. 'Evil' here has the idea of malignant, aggressively evil. Someone with a malignant mind will give an evil interpretation to everything he sees, and in consequence his being will be filled with unrelenting darkness. Compare Titus 1:15.

[10] Peter, a Jew, uses a Jewish idiom—they are characterized by curse. They are a walking curse, damaging everyone they touch. But how does one train his heart in

15having forsaken the right way[1] they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16but he got a rebuke for his wrongdoing—a mute donkey speaking with a human voice restrained the insanity of the prophet.[2] 17These are waterless springs, clouds driven by a storm,[3] for whom the blackest of the darkness[4] has been reserved forever.[5]

Their victims lose out

18Because speaking pompous words of emptiness they entice through fleshly lusts, through licentiousness, those who have actually escaped from those who are living in error, 19promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a person is overcome, by that he also is brought into bondage. 20For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the real knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter circumstances have become worse for them than the first ones. 21For it would have been better[6] for them not to have

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greediness? Training involves repetition; you act in a greedy way every time you get the chance.

[1] Their first decision was to forsake the right—once you turn out the light you condemn yourself to stumble around in the dark.

[2] Peter says that what Balaam did was 'insane', just like the mercenary 'prophets' of our day.

[3] Such clouds often rush past without dropping any water. The false teachers make all sorts of promises, but being empty they cannot deliver; they cheat their hearers.

[4] This darkness is associated with Satan's kingdom. Peter is saying that they will share Satan's destiny. The description given to these false teachers is unusually severe, Peter really does not like them! Since God hates those who have sold themselves to do evil (Psalm 5:5-6, Deuteronomy 7:10), so does Peter, and so must we. (Psalm 97:10 has a command: "You who love Jehovah, hate evil!" David, at least, obeyed it—Psalm 26:5, 31:6, 119:113, 139:21-22. How about us?) God's love includes hating evil, of necessity, because of the consequences of the evil. If God loves us He must be against whatever may harm us.

[5] Just over 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "forever" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[6] Oh my, batten down the hatches! If it would have been **better** for them not to have known, then of necessity they are now worse off than they were before they knew (as verse 20 makes clear). But before they knew they were lost, so what can be worse than that? To be lost without a chance. Before, they were lost but had the option to be saved. But once they know the Truth, if they throw it away there is no second chance. Hebrews 6:4-6 is plain enough (if you hear someone twist the Text into a pretzel in an effort to avoid the plain meaning, you may be sure that whatever position he is trying to defend is incorrect). "For it is impossible for those who were once for all [*hapax*] enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become sharers in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the coming age, and have fallen away—*it is impossible* to renew them again to repentance, thereby crucifying the Son of God **again**, *just* for themselves, holding Him up to contempt." You cannot crucify again unless you have crucified at least once already. For someone to crucify Jesus again must mean that he has indeed taken advantage of the first crucifixion, he was indeed saved—if he was never really saved he never really appropriated the first crucifixion, so he cannot do it **again**.

really known the way of the righteousness, than having really known it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to its own vomit"[1] and a bathed sow to wallowing in mud.

So take the Truth seriously!!

3 1Dear ones, this is now a second letter I am writing to you[2] (in both of which I stir up your sincere mind by way of reminder), 2so that you remember the words that were spoken before by the holy prophets and the command of the Lord and Savior, through your apostles.[3]

Mockers will come

3Knowing this first: in the last days mockers will come, living according to their own lusts 4and saying: "Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." 5This because they deliberately ignore[4] that heavens[5] and land (out of water and through water)[6] had been existing from of old by the word of God, 6by which *word* the world[7] that then was perished, being flooded by water.[8]

I have used 'to really know' to translate the heightened form *επιγινωσκω* (in contrast to *γινωσκω*, 'to know') and 'real knowledge' to translate the heightened form *επιγνωσις* (in contrast to *γνωσις*, 'knowledge'). I consider that the Holy Spirit is an intelligent and honest user of human language, so His choice of the heightened forms was deliberate. Those who seek to arrive at the intended meaning of the Text need to respect that deliberate choice. When Peter says someone has a "real knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ", that someone must be saved.

To elevate a doctrinal system above the Word of God is a form of idolatry.

1 See Proverbs 26:11.

2 See 1 Peter 1:1 for the identification of the addressees.

3 Peter places the "command of the Lord and Savior through your apostles" (which I take to be a reference to N.T. writings) on a par with the "words spoken before by the holy prophets", which evidently refers to O.T. writings. Since "apostles" is plural, I take it that Peter was aware that there were several authors.

4 It appears to me that the term "deliberately" has a direct bearing on the intended meaning. How can one 'forget' deliberately? To 'ignore' is deliberate; to 'pretend' is deliberate. When a professor or a scholar or a scientist ignores the scientific evidence for a worldwide flood he is deliberately deceiving his students or readers. To do so is to be perverse.

5 There is no definite article with 'heavens', I suppose because the third heaven, God's abode, is not included—the reference here would be to the first heaven (the atmosphere) and the second (stellar space).

6 To be visible and useable (for normal purposes) land must rise above the water level, 'out of water', but to sustain life there must be water available on the land as well, 'through/by water'.

7 "World" is different from "land" (vs. 5) and refers to the organized world—Noah's flood did not destroy the planet earth, just the organized surface. It was the divine decree that unleashed the destructive forces.

8 All around the world there are layers of sedimentary material hundreds of meters deep, and the layerings are similar. The whole globe was scoured and the surface rearranged about 4350 years ago. To ignore the evidence is a deliberate choice, and has serious consequences.

This world will be destroyed

7But the current heavens, and the earth, are being reserved by His word for fire,[1] being preserved until the day of judgment and perdition of godless men.[2]

The Lord is longsuffering

8But dear ones, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.[3] 9The Lord is not delaying the promise, as some consider delay, but rather is patient toward us, not wishing anyone to perish but all to come into repentance.[4]

Hasten the Day of God

10However, the day of the Lord will come like a thief at night, in which heavens[5] will pass away with a whoosh, while the elements will be dissolved by burning—both the earth and the works in it will be completely consumed. 11Therefore, since all these things will be destroyed, what kind of people ought you to be in holy living and godliness, 12expecting and hastening[6] the coming of the day of God, because of which heavens, being on fire, will be dissolved, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

A better world is coming

13Nevertheless, we look for new heavens and a new earth[7] in which dwells righteousness, according to His promise.

So be serious!

14Therefore, dear ones, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace,[8] faultless and blameless; 15and consider the

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1 God promised Noah that He would never destroy the world by water again, designating the rainbow as a symbol of that promise (there were no rainbows before the Flood)—the next time it will be by fire. The destruction in Noah's day involved the earth and the first heaven, the atmosphere; the next destruction will include the second heaven, stellar space, as well.

2 "Preserved"—our planet was created for the use of the human race and placed under human administration, so it cannot be destroyed until human history has run its course.

3 Although I myself have been partial to the idea that this information constitutes a precise formula, it is doubtless more prudent to take this as a general statement, showing that an eternal Being does not regard time the way we do.

4 If everything were 'cut and dried', there would be no point in waiting.

5 The same comment applies as in verse 5 above.

6 "Hastening" is a transitive verb. If we can hasten the coming, we can also delay it, or words do not mean anything. The point is, what we do or do not do makes a difference, which is why there will be an accounting. I imagine that there are outside limits or parameters that God's sovereignty will guarantee, but within those parameters it is up to us (like players on a football field—the score is up to them). So how can we hasten the coming of God's day? By living our lives to the hilt on behalf of His Kingdom, standing up for biblical values in the society at large, working to get the Gospel to the last ethnic nation.

7 God is not through creating, but since the Son will have His bride, the next time around righteousness will be guaranteed.

8 When we face the Creator are we going to see a smile, or a frown—it is up to us.

longsuffering of our Lord to be salvation[1]—just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you, according to the wisdom given to him, **16**as also in all his epistles[2] (speaking in them of these things, about which there are some things hard to understand), which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures,[3] to their own destruction.[4] **17**You therefore, dear ones, being forewarned, be on guard lest, being carried away by the error of the wicked, you fall from your own steadfastness.[5] **18**Rather, may you grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To Him be the glory both now and into the eternal day.[6] Amen.

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[1] Peter repeats the truth stated in verse 9 above—just because God is not striking us down like He did with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) does not mean that we are getting a free ride. If you have sense, you look ahead.

[2] Peter was obviously aware of a 'Pauline corpus'—the use of 'all' suggests that Peter was aware of a fair number of Paul's letters.

[3] Peter affirms that Paul's letters are Scripture!

[4] The verb form of this noun is usually rendered 'to perish'—the implication is that such people are lost. To distort what is in a newspaper or magazine does not have the same consequence—it is distorting God's Word that is serious.

[5] Peter emphasizes human responsibility, again.

[6] Peter does not use the usual 'forever', but the effect is the same.